

The Church of the Resurrection

Catholicon

In the Church of Resurrection "Catholicon is called the holy place which is exactly opposite and to the east of the holy Ciborium and it belongs to the Orthodox's . The Catholicon, as a church in the church, the middle part of the whole construction of the church of Resurrection. It is a long and big room which has got imposing cupola, its height 29 meters, supported by 4 columns with Corinthian capitals. The arches, the domes and the cupola are older constructions, while the side walls, the niche of the holy altar and the marble chancel screen are new additions which were made during the renovation of the church, in 1870, by Komnenos the architect from Mytilini.

Originally, the Catholicon is the central klitos of the triklitos Basilica Romanic style. It was built by crusaders in 1130 and it was in a room of trikamaro which connected, in the past, the Rotunda with the Basilica of Constantine.

You enter the Catholicon from the entrance which is opposite to the holy Ciborium and it is called "Royal arch" which has on the top a stone frieze with the engraving: HAIL AND BE PLEASED THE BRIDE OF THE GREAT KING BEING SAME TO THE BEAUTY OF YOUR BRIDEGROOM AND WITH YOUR PEOPLE WE WORSHIP YOU THE LIFE GIVER.

The Arab speaking calls the Catholicon "nousoul-tinia" which means "the middle of the world". This name is obviously connected with the marble sphere, the Omphalus, which is on a special base exactly after the entrance. There is already a connotation in the psalm 74. 12 that "God my King is from of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth" According to

this meaning the historian Iasipos uses the Greek term "omphalus of the Earth" to characterize Jerusalem and especially its church. This is a tradition to the Christians who consider the church of Resurrection as the "omphalus of the earth», the spiritual center of the whole Christian World. On the side walls, right and left, there are stalls and shrines and two wooden carven Episcopal thrones. The right throne is used by the Patriarch while the left one by the archbishop who represents the absent Patriarch in the ceremonies. In the main church there is an impress cupola which is called "cupola of the Catholicon" or "the small cupola opposing to the big one of the holy Ciborium.

In the interior the dome is decorated with a modern mosaic which is made according to the orthodox tradition. In the middle of it, the Pantocrator accepts the bene of Theotocos, Prodromos, the Angels and the prophets while on orbicular spandrels there are the four Evangelists with their allegorical symbols on this figuration.

On the eastern side of the Catholicon there is an imposing marble chancel screen, which has got seven arches in two lines. The two side ones lead to side altars and the central one, which is the holy portal, leads to the altar. On the top of the five arches there is a marble epistyle with an engraving in capital letters: BE HAPPY ZION, HOLY MOTHER OF THE CHURCHES, GOD'S HOME, YOU FIRSTLY TOOK FORGIVENESS OF THE SINS AFTER THE RESURRECTION.

The holy altar is about one meter above the floor of the Catholicon and in the middle there is the big chancel table, appropriate to the place, covered with valuable clothing. In the semicircular arch of the altar there are marble thrones, the one in the centre is for the Patriarch. In the sides there are steps on which the clergy sit in solemn ceremonies. On the right and left of the holy altar there are two stairs. The right one leads to the Golgotha and the left one to the archways behind the big chancel screen.